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Aquino Fellows Recognized at February 5 Ceremony

Journalist Eileen G. Mangubat and interfaith dialogue leader Taha M. Basman received the Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. Fellowships for Professional Development during a February 5 ceremony at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. Over 70 former IV grantees, former Aquino fellows, media representatives and members of interfaith dialogue groups attended. Former President Corazon Aquino and U.S. Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone presented the awards. The Director of the State Department's Office of International Visitors, W. Charles Moore II, traveled to Manila for this occasion and delivered remarks congratulating the recipients and commending the U.S. Embassy for establishing the fellowships.

Eileen Mangubat is a dynamic leader of the community press corps. Currently publisher of Cebu Daily News and two other papers owned by Inquirer Publications, Inc., she is a driving force behind the the Cebu Citizens-Press Council.

Taha Basman is a leading advocate for Muslim-Christian dialogue and conflict resolution in the Philippines. He is conducting several national campaigns to



U.S. Ambassador Francis Ricciardone (left) and former President Corazon Aquino presented to journalist Eileen G. Mangubat (center), publisher of Cebu Daily News, the 2003 Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. Fellowships for Professional Development.

foster greater understanding between Muslims and Christians. Well respected by Muslims and Christians alike, he has

earned the title of "Bishop Basman" from his Christian counterparts.

The U.S. Embassy established the Benigno S. Aquino, Jr. Fellowships for Professional Development in 1988 as part of its International Visitor Program. Awardees receive an individual International Visitor grant as well as national recognition for excellence in the fields of journalism or public service, two areas in which Ninoy Aquino distinguished himself.

Director of the Office of International Visitors Visits RP

The director of the State Department's Office of International Visitors, W. Charles Moore II, was in the Philippines from February 4 – 9. He spoke at the third annual meeting of the International Visitor Program-Philippines (IVP-Phils) Alumni Foundation, participated in the 14th annual Aquino Awards Ceremony, met former IVs and consulted with the Board of Directors

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W. Charles Moore II, Director of the Office of International Visitors represented the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the third annual meeting of the IVP-Phils.

Director of the Office of International Visitors Visits RP

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of IVP-Phils on how to establish similar alumni associations elsewhere in the world. Moore visited Bulacan province to meet former IV grantee Governor Josie de la Cruz; and he toured the Aquino Center with former President Corazon C. Aquino. He visited Smokey Mountain, where he observed how former Aquino Fellow and environmental activist Father Benigno Beltran is developing new opportunities for local residents through livelihood projects in recycling, organic farming, handicrafts and fertilizer production.

Moore said that seeing the activities of the individual IV grantees and IVP-Phils would help him work with other embassies to develop similar projects to sustain the momentum of the IV experience. He also invited IVP-Phils President Chito Sobrepeña to speak at the 2003 National Council of International Visitors in Washington, D.C. in March.



IV Program alumni held their third annual meeting February 8, on the theme "Educate and Lead: It Starts with Me." Nearly 100 former IV grantees gathered for a day of speeches and fellowship including a keynote address by former Senator and Education Secretary Raul Roco and Director of the Office of International Visitors W. Charles Moore II. The group reviewed the past two years of work completed by IVP-Phils, planned new programs for next year and elected new officers.

Program News

U.S. Embassy Manila Engages the Public on the Need to Disarm Iraq

Information Officer Karen Kelley appeared on a nationwide public affairs talk show on NBN 4 on February 7 to discuss the Iraq crisis. The telecast had live audio links to four regional radio stations, which fielded calls from listeners who were given

the opportunity to ask questions on the Iraq crisis.

Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone shared his extensive knowledge of Iraq issues in a series of press activities, giving his insights on the Iraq story "behind the headlines." The Ambassador met with senior editors and columnists on February 7 in a PAS Manila-hosted roundtable discussion. Public Affairs Counselor Ronald J. Post summarized the Secretary's briefing

using PowerPoint material and, with the Ambassador, engaged the invited journalists in discussion. This resulted in an article in *BusinessWorld* entitled "A Chat with Ricciardone," providing a detailed accounting of U.S. government policy in support of the effort to disarm Iraq, and a political analysis piece on the implications for US-RP bilateral relations in the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

The Ambassador also took part in separate interviews with television journalists from cable and commercial television stations, including a 40-minute interview on a morning news program February 10, an hour-long one-on-one session February 11 on ABS-CBN's *Strictly Politics* and on Gene Orejana's *Online*, March 19.

Iraqi Victims of Saddam Hussein Meet with Manila Audiences

During the third week of February, Dr. Hussain Shahrstani, former chief scientific advisor to the Iraq Atomic Energy Agency and current director of the Iraq Refugee Aid Council visited Manila to give Filipino audiences a better understanding of the situation in Iraq. Shahrstani was imprisoned and tortured from 1979 to 1991 for his refusal to use scientific knowledge to develop weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. He had numerous interviews

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PAO Ronald J. Post (left) and Dr. Hussain Shahrstani (right), former adviser to the Iraq Atomic Energy Agency, participate in a digital video conference with Indonesia.

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on radio and TV; and he gave two press conferences. He met with Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, and civil society leaders, briefed eleven members of the Philippine House of Representatives, and answered questions from senior Philippine government officials. The Asian Institute of Management sponsored him in a special program for an academic and business audience at their center.

Dr. Shahrstani described graphically the human rights situation in Iraq and spoke authoritatively on Saddam Hussein's WMD programs. Congressmen and several other of Shahrstani's interlocutors told him that his stories had opened their eyes to the horrible plight of the Iraqi people under Saddam Hussein. His life story and his messages reached not only a large Filipino audience but, through press coverage by Associated Press, Reuters, and Agence France Press, a broad international audience as well.

Another perspective was provided by former Iraq Oil Minister, A.R. Al-Chalabi. Visiting Manila from March 13-18, Al-Chalabi met with nearly a hundred journalists, numerous cabinet ministers, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. He addressed Muslim leaders, military officers and defense attachés from a dozen countries. He talked with business leaders and officials from the Ministry of Energy; and he was featured on prime time television and radio and on the front page of *The Philippine Star*.

Al-Chalabi described the horrors of Saddam Hussein's regime. He told of the anxiety that he and his family felt after he was retired from the Ministry of Oil in 1990, and the family was forced to flee the country. An oil expert, Al-Chalabi discussed Iraq's oil wealth – second in size to Saudi Arabia – and described the process for awarding oil contracts. Under Saddam Hussein contracts were awarded for political reasons not merit – another example of cronyism bringing a country to bankruptcy. Al-Chalabi argued that Iraqis are capable of administering their own affairs, but first the ruling hierarchy must be removed from office.

Previously inactive in politics, Al-Chalabi is now working with other former Iraqi government officials living in exile. In early February, they released an appeal for Saddam Hussein to step down to prevent war.



Former Oil Minister under Saddam Hussein, A.R. Al-Chalabi, rejected the view that the United States was after Iraq's oil. He accused Saddam Hussein of cronyism in the awarding of oil contracts.

DVCs Let the Voices of Iraqi Dissidents be Heard

The Public Affairs Section conducted a series of digital video conferences (DVCs) with prominent Iraqi dissidents to broaden public understanding of the need to disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction and replace the regime of Saddam Hussein. Rend Rahim Francke of the Iraq Foundation in Washington, D.C., Dr. Hussain Al-Shahrstani of the Iraqi Refugee Aid Council, and Laith Kubba of the National Endowment for Democracy, aired the concerns of the silenced Iraqi people. They addressed audiences through three separate video conferences scheduled on February 12, 18 and 26, attended by representatives from the media, government, academic community and think tanks. Speaking from their first-hand experience with Saddam Hussein's abusive regime and his campaign to develop weapons of mass destruction, the experts presented a convincing case for regime change and Iraqi disarmament.

All three speakers complemented one another in covering various aspects of the Iraq question: the atrocities of Saddam Hussein's regime; the existence of weapons of mass destruction; the debate in the U.N. Security Council; and the restoration of democracy in a post-Saddam Iraq.

The emotionally chilling accounts by Francke and Shahrstani of the atrocities that Saddam Hussein has committed

articulated a convincing argument for the liberation of the Iraqi people. The stories, reflecting their own experiences and those of close relatives and friends, illustrated the injustices and abuses committed by the regime. Speaking from personal experience as the Chief Scientific Advisor of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission and drawing on accounts from fellow Iraqi scientists, Dr. Shahrstani confirmed that Iraq possesses biological and chemical weapons in its military arsenal. He credibly underscored the danger posed by these weapons, particularly VX and anthrax.

An advocate for strengthening civil society, Laith Kubba shared valuable insights about how reconstruction should proceed in post-Saddam Iraq. He highlighted the need to foster civic participation in the rebuilding of the country.

Rend Rahim Franke's Story of Terror

In her video conference with Filipino journalists on February 12, 2003, Rend Rahim Francke shared her knowledge of the plight of the Iraqi people under Saddam Hussein's rule. Following are excerpts of what she said.

It's always painful to talk about Iraq and, of course, nowadays I find myself talking about Iraq more and more frequently. First of all, I am a U.S. citizen but I am originally from Iraq and I spent my childhood and youth in Iraq. I stay in touch with Iraq in the

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best way that I can. I have been to Northern Iraq on frequent occasions since 1992 to the area that is controlled by the Kurdish parties. And, of course, I stay in touch with Iraqis that go in and out of Iraq as much as possible.

Let me just start by saying that prior to 1968, Iraq was a country that was prosperous, that had a high revenue from oil. It had an educated urban population. It had a great deal of contact with the rest of the world. Iraqis had been traveling since the 1930s to Europe and the UK and France and to the United States for graduate studies; and there was a high level of professionalism. Iraq had and still has, I believe, the highest number per capita of engineers in the entire world. This was a very urban population, a population which was well on its way to becoming part of the developed world and had every prospect of success.

In 1968, everything changed, changed very dramatically when the Ba'ath Party, and Saddam Hussein specifically, came to power. The Ba'ath Party came into power through a military coup, and at first Saddam Hussein was Vice-President until 1979. But from the beginning, this regime came in with a blood bath. Very shortly after it took power, there was a public hanging of eleven individuals who were accused of spying for foreign countries, and who were accused of being traitors. Of course, when I say accused, I do not mean convicted because there is no such thing as a court of law in the Ba'ath regime. It is up to the regime to indict, judge, condemn and sentence. These people were left hanging in a square in Baghdad for several days. It was the first inkling of the Ba'ath policy of striking first, cutting down any people that you suspect of the slightest dissent and using them as an example to others. Of course in the 1970s, Iraq's income rose and there still wasn't a feeling of danger or fear although it began to build up. People were sort of in a euphoria with all the income that was coming to Iraq and all the material plenty. But even as the finances of Iraq were rising and improving, the space of life, the space of civil society, the space for political freedom of thought or expression was closing down very narrowly. I was in Iraq in the mid- to late '70s, and certainly by 1977 or so, the writing was on the wall. This was a regime that intended to rule by fear, by intimidation, by brutal repression, by blackmail, by all sorts of means in order to

monopolize power and cut away any possible disaffection or any hint of dissent.

In 1979, Saddam Hussein came to power, and within only a couple of weeks, Saddam Hussein convened a large meeting of the Ba'ath Party, the senior Ba'ath Party officials. And he started denouncing specific individuals who were in that hall and denouncing them as traitors. And as he called out their names, they were pulled out of that great big amphitheater and taken outside. Then Saddam asked several members of the Ba'ath Party who were still sitting in that amphitheater to go out and execute those people who had forcibly been taken out. Twenty-two members of the Ba'ath were executed on that day as the people sat in the hall and could hear the shooting that was going on outside. By the way, this event was videotaped and shown on television in Iraq, and the video was circulated long after, and private individuals had a copy.

The importance of this event is that Saddam Hussein was sending a clear message. "First of all, I am going to choose whom I consider to be my enemy. Whether you are guilty or innocent is immaterial. I'm going to single you out. I'm going to label you and I am going to be the judge; and this judgment of mine is going to be a subjective judgment. It has nothing to do with what you have done or what you haven't done."

The second thing is that he wanted to make sure that other members of his regime, of the Ba'ath Party, became

complicit in his crimes. There was sort of a blood brotherhood created during that event. And thirdly, of course, the fact that they publicized the video was a signal not only to the Ba'ath Party, but to everybody in Iraq that this was how Saddam intended to rule.

I can safely say that from there on, Iraq has lived under a reign of terror that is unparalleled even by other standards of dictatorship; and the only thing I can compare it to is the worst days of the Stalin regime in the 1930s, and indeed Stalin is Saddam Hussein's model.

DVC Discusses the Role of Think Tanks in Influencing Foreign Policy

On March 7, Manila joined Wellington, New Zealand in a digital video conference (DVC) with Dr. James G. McGann, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Research Institute and Founder and President of McGann Associates. Sixteen representatives from the Philippine Foreign Service Institute, the National Defense College of the Philippines, the Senate Policy Study Group, the Georgetown Club, the Asian Institute of Management Policy Center, the University of the Philippines Asian Center, and IVP-Phils Inc. engaged in the discussion.

While outlining the history of the development of think tanks around the world, McGann discussed their role in studying and analyzing policy. He saw this as necessary for documenting lessons

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CAO Molly Stephenson (center) hosts a digital video conference on the role of think tanks in U.S. foreign policy. On the video monitor (inset) is Dr. James McGann of the Foreign Policy Institute.



In commemoration of Black History Month, the American Studies Resource Center in Ateneo de Davao exhibited the work of contemporary African-American artists.

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learned from the past and developing workable alternatives to new challenges.

Black History Month Observed at American Studies Resource Centers

During the month of February, the African-American experience was acknowledged at ASRCs in Davao, Iloilo, Bacolod, Baguio, Manila and Batac. Each center mounted paper shows celebrating African-American literature, art, music, and leadership in science, business and government. Cultural Affairs Officer Thomas J. Kral was present for the inauguration of a two-week exhibit of the paper show "New Visions: 10 African-American Artists" at Ateneo de Davao. After he spoke about African-American contributions to American society and culture, students put on a cultural program of music and poetry inspired by the images of the African-American artists.

CSB Students Prepare for Exchange Program for Hearing-Impaired

Dr. Sidney McQuay of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at Rochester Institute of Technology and students and teachers from the College of St. Benilde of De La Salle University visited the Cultural Affairs Office in preparation for their upcoming travel to Rochester, New York where they will participate in a symposium for the hearing-impaired.

NTID was established in 1965 to provide tertiary-level technological education for the hearing-impaired. Drawing upon a grant from the Nippon Foundation of Japan, NTID has established the Post-secondary Education Network-International (PEN-International) to link universities and colleges around the world that provide tertiary level education to students who are hearing-impaired. PEN-International's goal is "to improve post-secondary career education for deaf students so that they can become productive members of their respective home societies and compete in the workplace on a par with their peers who can



Dr. Sidney McQuay (right) together with CAO Thomas J. Kral talk with the students and teachers from the College of Saint Benilde during their visit to the TJIC.

hear." The focus of their education is information technology and engineering.

PAS Co-sponsors National Museum's Exhibit on Rice and the Filipino

The Public Affairs Section made a small grant to the National Museum to assist them in mounting what will be a two-year long exhibition on Rice and the Filipino. Patterned after the Smithsonian Institution exhibit "Seeds of Change," which attracted millions of viewers during its two-year showing a decade ago, the National Museum has gathered materials from archaeology, anthropology, sociology, history, biotechnology, literature, musicology, botany, zoology, art history and food sciences to present a portrait of rice and the Filipino. CAO Thomas Kral delivered remarks at the opening ceremony. He noted that this exhibit plays an advocacy role in publicizing the Banaue Rice Terraces and the urgent need for local and international support to keep this World Heritage site from deteriorating.

PAO Speaks in U.E. Forum

The College of Arts and Sciences of the University of the East (U.E.) hosted a forum on "The Crisis in Iraq: U.S. Policy and the Implications for the Philippines" on March 6. The seventh of the college's lecture series on contemporary issues, the forum featured PAO Ronald J. Post, Mr. Victoriano M. Lecaros, spokesperson of the

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Department of Foreign Affairs, and Dr. Edberto Villegas, chairperson of the Development Studies Program of the University of the Philippines in Manila.

Mr. Baltazar N. Endriga, Vice President for Academic Affairs, opened the forum and Dr. Carmelita S. Flores, Dean of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and board member of the American Studies Association of the Philippines, introduced the guest lecturers. Fulbright professor Dr. Wendy Hazard moderated the open forum. Dr. Josefina R. Cortes, U.E. President, delivered the closing remarks.



Literacy Issues Discussed at the Annual Conference of the Reading Association of the Philippines

Dr. Cathy Collins-Block, board member of the International Reading Association (IRA), traveled to Manila to participate in the 33rd annual conference of its Philippine affiliate, the Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP), March 8-9, 2003. More than 250 teachers attended the conference, coming from the northern tip of Luzon to General Santos City in southern Mindanao. Focusing on the high dropout rate of students in elementary school (only a third of the students entering school complete

Fulbright-Sycip Distinguished Lecturer, Dr. James McCormick, delivered a series of talks on American Foreign Policy during a three-week visit to the Philippines.

sixth grade nationwide), conference papers dealt with literacy development and language instruction as critical needs that the Department of Education must address. Collins-Block elicited suggestions from the audience as to how the IRA could assist in making reading materials more available to elementary and secondary students in the Philippines; and she explored ways by which RAP could better benefit from its affiliation with the IRA. CAO Thomas J. Kral presented a plenary dealing with reading

teaching methodology drawing examples from the Department of State's English teaching publications, including *English Teaching Forum*.

CAO Speaks on Peace Education at Seminars in Northern Mindanao

CAO Thomas Kral conducted three one-day seminars on "Developing a Peace Education Curriculum for Philippine Schools" in northern Mindanao, January 9-11 for the Commission on Higher Education, Region 10, Cagayan de Oro; Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro; and Iligan Institute of Technology, Iligan. Speaking before capacity crowds totaling 300 teachers and administrators, the CAO discussed different curricular models incorporating conflict resolution and collaborative learning techniques for social science and language classes from elementary through tertiary level instruction. He introduced teachers to materials available on the Internet that can serve as a basis for developing materials to help students see themselves as world citizens with all the responsibilities that implies.

Participants traveled from distant locations including cities within the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Both Iligan Institute of Technology and Xavier University have established centers for peace studies and encourage community action projects and research to foster Christian-Muslim dialogue.



Dr. Cathy Collins-Block (3rd from right), board member of the International Reading Association (IRA), Linda H. Warfel (3rd from left), Vice-President of Asia Pacific Scholastic Hong Kong Ltd., and Dr. Marietta Reyes-Otero (2nd from right), President of the Reading Association of the Philippines (RAP), pose with CAO Thomas J. Kral and other RAP officers.

PAEF News

Xavier U Sponsors an All-Mindanao Conference for Int'l Studies Students

Xavier University hosted the first Mindanao-wide conference for 200 International Studies students March 14 and 15. Among the guest speakers was Dr. Wendy Hazard, Fulbright lecturer in American History at the University of the East in Manila.

The program was held in the Little Theater of Xavier University. Dr. Mark Labuntog, chairperson of the English Department and last year's grantee to the Center for Asia-Pacific Exchange (CAPE) program in Honolulu, was a member of Dr. Hazard's panel of reactors. The new president of the American Studies Association of Cagayan de Oro, Mrs. Joy Enriquez, introduced Hazard to the audience.

Political Scientist Discuss Foreign Policy of Clinton and Bush Administrations

Professor James M. McCormick, Chair of the Department of Political Science at Iowa State University and Fulbright-Sycip Distinguished Lecturer to the Philippines, completed a three-week lecture series with audiences including university students in Manila, Iloilo, Bacolod and Davao, members of the Senate Office of External Affairs, Human Rights Commissioners and faculty of the Foreign Service Institute of the



Fulbright scholar Dr. Wendy Hazard was guest lecturer at the first Mindanao-wide conference for International Studies students. Dr. Hazard (sixth from left) poses with professors and students.

Department of Foreign Affairs. Reviewing the foreign policy thrusts of the Clinton and Bush administrations, Professor McCormick characterized the current policy as one targeted against terrorism and tyrants.

Professor McCormick was interviewed on the prime-time cable television program "Online with Gene Orejana," and took viewers' questions which focused primarily on the Iraq crisis. Besides addressing policy change resulting from the 9/11 terrorist attacks, he also lectured on the role of the U.S. Congress in foreign policymaking. He compared the current period with that of World War II until the outbreak of the

Vietnam War when Congress deferred to executive leadership.

IRC News

State Department's IRO Works with Filipino Librarians

Stephen Mallinger, State Department Information Resource Officer for Southeast Asia, spent the week of January 26 in the Philippines to assist the TJIC in expanding its outreach services and disseminating new information products. He visited the American Studies Research Centers at De La Salle University and St. Louis University. In Baguio, he gave a lecture to the Benguet-Baguio local library association and library school students; and he conducted an online demonstration for the administration and faculty of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA).

He visited the rich American Historical Collection at Ateneo de Manila's Rizal Library and discussed ways by which U.S. historians and researchers could utilize this extensive repository. He also consulted with National Library Director Prudenciana Cruz and discussed ways by which the TJIC could collaborate with the National Library in reaching out to public libraries throughout the country. On his last day in the Philippines, he delivered a lecture at

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Information Resource Officer Stephen Mallinger made his first visit to the Philippines in January. Above he appears with Col. Tadeo G. Claravall at the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio City.

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the library school of the University of the Philippines and he was briefed on the university's periodical indexing project.

IRC Director Trains Mindanao Information Specialists

Eva B. Brillo, Director of the Embassy's Thomas Jefferson Information Center, traveled to Cagayan de Oro on March 5-7 to be featured speaker at the general assembly of the Academic Libraries Information Network (ALINET) in Mindanao and to work with information resource specialists from the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. At the general assembly on March 7, Ms. Brillo delivered two lectures on "Knowledge Management and Librarianship" and "Managing Electronic Resources for Reference Service" to 70 representatives of institutions participating in the ALINET network. Participants were librarians from the major academic institutions in central and eastern Mindanao, including Cotabato, Bukidnon, Surigao, Agusan and Marawi.

Seven faculty members and two librarians of Mindanao State University



Former Senator and Secretary of the Department of Education Raul Roco was keynote speaker at the third annual meeting of IVP-Phils. Shown from left to right are, PAO Ron Post, IVP-Phils Chair Chito Sobrepeña and Senator Roco.

(MSU) traveled from Marawi City to participate in intensive training with Ms. Brillo at Xavier University (XU). The XU American Studies Resource Center (ASRC) Director and four of her librarians joined them. The IRC Director introduced the audience to the Embassy, TJIC/IRC,

and International Information Programs (IIP) web sites and described their content. She showed them how to use the links to other government, academic, and NGO sources, and gave them a quick lesson on Internet searching strategies at their request.



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